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# CDF NEWS RELEASE

California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection



## SONOMA-LAKE-NAPA UNIT

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### **Investigation of 143 fires leads to an arson arrest**

**Woodland** – Robert Eric Eason of Guinda, California was arrested by the California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection (CDF) Arson Investigation Unit on Thursday, October 12, 2006.

Eason, age 37, has been arrested and charged with 12 felony counts of arson to forest lands, relating to fires that have occurred in the Capay Valley & Rumsey Canyon area of Yolo County, in 2006. Additionally, Eason is charged with 12 felony counts of using an incendiary time delay device. One charged fire is a 1,000 acre wildland fire that threatened numerous residences, barns and out buildings on September 21<sup>st</sup>, 2006 during high winds. Eason has been a volunteer firefighter with the Capay Fire Protection District since 1988. CDF Investigators continue to examine evidence relating to more than 143 fires that have occurred since 1988, to determine if Eason can be charged with additional felony counts of arson.

“Past fires along the Highway 16 corridor have cost the taxpayers over 20 million dollars to suppress, not to mention endangering firefighters lives and private property”, said CDF Unit Chief Ernie Loveless.

This is the third arrest by CDF’s Arson Investigation Unit (AIU) in Northern California this summer. Arrests have been made and prosecution is under way of serial arsonists in Contra Costa and Shasta Counties. The CDF AIU is comprised of CDF Peace Officers who are highly trained and specialized arson investigators. Arson is a costly and time consuming crime to solve, yet CDF Investigators have a conviction rate of over 90%.

The AIU investigators worked closely with the Yolo County District Attorney’s office and investigators from the Sonoma-Lake-Napa CDF Unit to investigate and prosecute this series of arson fires.

Anyone with additional information is encouraged to contact CDF Arson Hotline at (800) 468-4408. Callers may remain anonymous.

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